

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
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September 16, 2003

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Veterans from across the country will be in Oklahoma City, Oct. 6-12, for the 2003 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. The festival is the culmination of a year-long fine arts competition open to all veterans receiving care at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities.

"The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival demonstrates that healing goes well beyond a person's physical recovery. Creative arts therapy plays an important role in the rehabilitation of the mind as well as the spirit," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

"VA is proud to give veterans the opportunity to develop their artistic talents, while improving their overall health and well-being," Principi said. "Helping them live rich, fulfilling and meaningful lives after trauma or disease is what this Festival is all about."

At the 2003 Festival, more than 120 talented veterans, first-place winners selected from nearly 3,000 competitors nationwide, will be in Oklahoma City for a week of workshops and rehearsals. The week will culminate on Sunday, Oct. 12, with a stage show and art exhibit at the Rose State College Performing Arts Center in Midwest City, Okla.

Beginning at 2 p.m., the music, drama and dance performers will showcase their talent at the stage show, accompanied by a professional orchestra. Artists will exhibit their work in the lobby of the Rose State College Performing Arts Center after the stage show.

The festival is co-sponsored by VA, the American Legion Auxiliary and Help Hospitalized Veterans. This year it is hosted by the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

For further information, contact Kim Byers, public affairs coordinator for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, at (734) 761-7824 or visit www.va.gov/vetevent/caf/2003.

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